

Section 2



EXISTING ARTS VENUES FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

ARTS MASTER PLAN -



EXISTING ARTS VENUES, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Within the natural, historical, regional and development contexts previously described, Chula Vista features an excellent variety of school programs for the visual and performing arts. The same cannot be said for professional arts groups. Only one such group, the San Diego Junior Theatre, currently operates within Chula Vista, and that operation is a storefront branch facility of a group based in San Diego.

For a city with a nearly one quarter million residents, it is surprising that Chula Vista has nearly no dedicated facilities for either the performing or visual arts. If Southwestern College's Mayan Hall is removed from the equation, Chula Vista is left with no traditional, dedicated indoor facilities for either the performing or visual arts. Without adequate facilities, the arts and culture scene will not flourish or grow in Chula Vista, cultural tourism will languish, and the City will miss out on a unique opportunity to take advantage of its diverse cultural traditions, strong school arts programs, its natural, historical, and regional contexts, and its development opportunities.

The City of Chula Vista's Public Facilities and Services Element of the recent adopted General Plan Update states *"While several facilities are available for display and presentation of the arts throughout our City, including the City branch libraries and recreation centers, there is limited availability of adequately designed or appropriately located facilities for both performances and exhibits. A main, central cultural arts venue, theater or center is lacking. Benefits of a cultural arts venue include having an identifiable city facility that could serve public and private performances and exhibits throughout the south San Diego County region and stimulate economic development and redevelopment."*

The following is an overview of existing venues, facilities and programs.

PERFORMING ARTS VENUES/SPACES

Traditionally, the performing arts (theatre, dance, opera, music, et al) are best served when viewed in a fixed-seat auditorium with a Proscenium Stage, an overhead fly space for scenery and lighting, appropriate acoustics and good viewing angles from all seats. A Proscenium Stage is the most typical stage formation for theaters. The audience only sits in front of the stage and the stage is framed on sides and the top, like a picture. The entire South Bay area has only one sizeable facility that meets this description - Mayan Hall.

➤ *Mayan Hall*

Mayan Hall is located in the central portion of eastern Chula Vista on the campus of Southwestern College. Mayan Hall is Southwestern College's performing arts facility, and has served students in the South Bay for over forty years. It also serves as a lecture hall. Mayan Hall features a lobby and entrance plaza, and was named for the Mayan architectural motifs that have been incorporated into many of the buildings on the Southwestern College campus. Mayan Hall's main

auditorium and stage are used primarily for Southwestern College productions and are only very rarely available for use by any outside groups. The main auditorium seats 461 people. The lower level of Mayan Hall contains a “Black Box” theatre as well as rehearsal space. A Black Box theatre is not called this because the walls are painted black, though often they are. A Black Box theatre has no permanent stage or seating area which allows the theatre to be configured as needed for each performance.

Other notable South Bay fixed-seat performance spaces include:

➤ *Civic Center Library Auditorium*

Chula Vista Public Library’s Civic Center Branch features a fixed seat auditorium that can accommodate up to 152 people. It has a tiny stage area appropriate for lectures, readings, film/video screenings, and small group performances. Overall, this is a 30-year old, outmoded facility that has never been renovated. From the beginning it was not intended to be used as a “theatre” but rather as a space for library programs to take place. Today it has uncomfortable seating, inadequate lighting and sound systems, poor acoustics and no backstage area or fly space. Despite these drawbacks, the auditorium is in regular use for children’s programming as well as serving as a film festival venue and space for meetings, lectures, and music performances.

➤ *Coors Amphitheatre*

The Coors Amphitheatre is located in southeastern Chula Vista. This is an outdoor performing arts venue operated by the for-profit corporation House of Blues®. Designed primarily for live music events, the theatre can seat 10,000 people in fixed seats, and approximately 10,000 more people can be accommodated on a grass area behind the permanent seating. The Amphitheatre is located seventeen miles from downtown San Diego and serves the entire San Diego County metropolitan region. The Coors Amphitheater offers primarily popular music concerts related to the varied cultural influences shaping contemporary music. Performers who have appeared at the Amphitheater range from Elton John to Jimmy Buffett.

Other notable South Bay performance spaces with portable seating and/or portable stages include:

➤ *Bolles Theatre*

The Bolles Theatre, named after current Cultural Arts Commissioner and School for the Creative and Performing Arts Facilitator Ron Bolles, is located on the Bonita Vista High School campus. The theatre serves as the annual location for the Bonitafest Melodrama. The theatre has a proscenium stage and can seat up to 200 people on folding chairs. Platforms in the seating area provide elevated seating. Theatres of this same limited size can be found on most of the high school campuses throughout the SUHSD.

➤ *Ruth Chapman Performing Arts Center*

The Ruth Chapman Performing Arts Center, built in 1995, is located on the EastLake High School campus. The main performance area is actually a multipurpose facility that features a proscenium stage and can seat up to 428 people on moveable chairs and in lecture hall seats. This often-used facility serves as an important venue for the entire Sweetwater Union High School District. In addition to the Ruth Chapman Theatre, the Center also has a Black Box theatre for smaller events.

➤ *Chula Vista High School Theatre (a.k.a. The Theatre on K Street)*

This frequently used theatre is a venue for the Chula Vista School for the Creative and Performing Arts (SCPA), which is located in western Chula Vista. The theatre has a proscenium stage, with movable chairs that can seat approximately 200 people. The theatre has a small lobby with space for displaying student artwork. The SCPA also has two other venues located on the campus of Chula Vista Middle School: the original 1930s style auditorium seats 200 people in folding chairs; and a new multipurpose room seats 450 people on moveable chairs. Both venues have proscenium stages.

➤ *Memorial Park Bowl*

The Memorial Park Bowl is a City-owned outdoor amphitheatre facility located in Memorial Park, adjacent to the Third Avenue Village. The Bowl can accommodate up to seven hundred people on a fixed stone seating area and is often used for the City's Music in the Park Summer Concert Series.

➤ *OnStage Playhouse*

Onstage Playhouse is located on Third Avenue and F Street and is one of the arts attractions of the Third Avenue Village. The OnStage Playhouse is currently in its 27th season and is the only live community theatre in Chula Vista. The storefront theatre operates year-round, producing six or more plays in an intimate space that can seat up to 60 people.

➤ *Otay Ranch High School Theatre*

This school has a proscenium stage situated in a multipurpose room with portable seating that can accommodate up to 450 people.

➤ *Rancho del Rey Middle School Theatre and EastLake Middle School Theatre*
Both schools have performance spaces that serve students of the respective schools as well as other Sweetwater Union High School District students. The performance spaces are actually frequent-use multi-purpose rooms with proscenium stages. Each facility can accommodate up to 450 people on folding chairs.

➤ *San Diego Junior Theatre*

San Diego Junior Theatre originally began 58 years ago as a community program by San Diego's Old Globe Theatre. Today, SDJT operates as an independent, nonprofit organization for the benefit of children throughout San Diego County and is the oldest continuing children's theatre program in the country. SDJT offers classes at Balboa Park, in La Jolla, and in a renovated

storefront facility in the heart of Chula Vista on Third Avenue. The Chula Vista storefront facility offers year-round theatre classes to all age children and teens, and also produces a series of four live plays throughout the year: one per quarter, twelve performances per play. The storefront has folding chairs on portable risers that can accommodate up to 120 people for each performance.

VISUAL ARTS AND HERITAGE FACILITIES

What was true about the surprising lack of adequately-equipped performing arts facilities in the South Bay is, unfortunately, also true for the Visual Arts. In fact, there are no specifically dedicated exhibition spaces for fine art in the entire South Bay other than the 1200 square foot gallery at *Southwestern College* that is predominately used by the college's own students and faculty.

Other notable visual arts-related spaces include:

➤ *The International Institute of Photographic Arts*

Established in 1972 to further the acceptance of color photography as fine art, the Institute houses a color photography collection that includes works by some of the most prominent photographers in the world, including one of the largest collections in the Dye Transfer medium. The Institute opened its doors to the general public in 2006 offering high quality art services and a new 5,000 square foot exhibition space.

➤ *OnStage Playhouse Art Gallery*

In addition to their live community theatre productions, OnStage Playhouse has a small lobby gallery space where local and regional artists are showcased.

➤ *Moctezuma Books and Gallery*

Moctezuma Books and Gallery, on Chula Vista's Third Avenue, regularly hosts artist receptions and poetry readings with local authors, artists, professors, and friends of the arts. All readings and events are bilingual. Moctezuma Gallery focuses on contemporary and modern art from the San Diego-Tijuana border area, Mexico and the Californias. The small Gallery features original paintings, drawings, ceramics, and prints. Established and emerging artists are exhibited

➤ *Rosemary Lane Galería*

The Rosemary Lane Galería is located in the South Branch of the Chula Vista Public Library, which was designed by famed Mexican architect Ricardo Legoretta. The Galería is essentially two linear hallway spaces that provide exhibition space for local and regional artists. It is open to the public during library hours and showcases between six to eight special exhibitions per year. It also serves as the main exhibition space for an annual showcase of SUHSD visual arts students.

Notable history and heritage-related exhibit spaces include:

➤ *Bonita Museum and Cultural Center*

The nonprofit Bonita Museum is dedicated to preserving the culture and history

of the Sweetwater Valley and South County. Established in 1987, the Museum has collected historical artifacts, photographs and other materials. In 2003, Supervisor Greg Cox announced that San Diego County would be constructing a new Bonita-Sunnyside Library and Museum in the heart of Bonita. With the help of numerous private contributions, construction was completed in the winter of 2005 and the Bonita Museum subsequently moved into its new 3000 sq. foot space.

➤ *Chula Vista Heritage Museum*

The Heritage Museum is part of the Chula Vista Public Library and is assisted by the Heritage Museum Society, a division of the nonprofit Friends of the Chula Vista Library. The 600 square foot Museum is dedicated to preserving the cultural and historic legacy of Chula Vista and is located on historic Third Avenue.

ARTS PROGRAMS

Overview of Existing Programs Sponsored by the City of Chula Vista:

➤ *Mayor's Performing and Visual Arts Task Force Grant Program*

In 1997, the Chula Vista City Council approved a sublease with the House of Blues Concerts, Inc. (formerly Universal Concerts) that established a process whereby a portion of ticket sales proceeds at the Coors Amphitheater would be paid to the City and utilized for a Performing and Visual Arts Fund. This fund is used for arts grants to the Chula Vista community for the purpose of promoting and stimulating the growth of performing and cultural arts within the City of Chula Vista.

As called for in the sublease, a Mayor's Performing and Visual Arts Task Force was established and it annually makes recommendations to the City Council regarding the arts grant awards. The Task Force is staffed by the Office of Arts & Culture which formally conducts the grant application process. For 2006, the Office of Arts & Culture received \$52,500 from the House of Blues for the fiscal year 2006/2007 grant cycle.

➤ *Chula Vista's Taste of the Arts Festival*

Chula Vista's premier outdoor festival is the Taste of the Arts, which celebrates all arts and culture disciplines and is the largest event of its kind in the South Bay. The festival has been produced annually for 19 years and typically features multiple stages with live professional music and dance performances, student talent, juried art exhibits, a variety of art and crafts for sale, hands-on art-making activities, and numerous vendor booths. For the past several years the festival has been staged at Bayside Park.

➤ *Music in the Park - Summer Concert Series*

Music in the Park is a summer concert series that has been presented by the City of Chula Vista for the past forty-four years. Music in The Park is a series of free, live music concerts of varying genres held in various parks throughout the city.

➤ *Gayle McCandliss Arts Awards*

Each year the Gayle McCandliss Arts Awards are presented during a City Council meeting. Individuals and organizations are invited to submit nominations for consideration. The awards are made possible by the Gayle McCandliss Art Awards Memorial Fund that was established in 1991 in honor of the late Mayor Gayle McCandliss. Consistent with her wishes, it was established as a perpetual fund to recognize and provide monetary support or recognition to individuals or groups who make substantial contribution to the arts in the City of Chula Vista. Awards are given the following categories:

1. Rising Star Awards

These awards recognize artistic achievement by talented young artists in every art form- dance, music, theater, medial, visual and literary arts. Nominees must be graduating high school seniors, a resident of the City of Chula Vista, and currently attending a public or private school. Certificates and monetary prizes are awarded to the winners. Winners may be invited to exhibit or perform their work at a City festival.

2. Bravo Award

This award recognizes significant artistic achievement by an individual whose work has helped to build community pride and appreciation of the art and culture of the City of Chula Vista. Out-of-school, adult individual artists in all disciplines are eligible. Certificates are awarded to the winner and they may be invited to exhibit or perform their work at a City festival

3. Distinguished Service Award

This award recognizes community service by an individual or group who has voluntarily given time and donated resources in support of Chula Vista's art, artists and the community's cultural life. Individuals, arts patrons, corporations or businesses, local government representatives, educators, and other non-profit organizations are eligible. A certificate of appreciation is presented to the honoree.

4. Literary Award

This award recognizes literary achievements by an individual or individuals whose works have helped to build better community understanding, appreciation and pride in the literary arts. The nominees are screened by a committee of the Library Board and Library staff and recommended to the Cultural Arts Commission for final approval. Eligibility is limited to Adult (18+) individual writers in any format who are residents of Chula Vista. Award plaques and monetary prizes are awarded to the winner(s).

➤ *Public Art Program*

The Office of Arts & Culture provides advisory services and administrative support for a broad array of individuals and organizations engaged in the field of public art in Chula Vista and the South Bay region. The Office of Arts & Culture maintains a listing of current artists working in a range of media.

The majority of funding for current public art opportunities comes from the Unified Port of San Diego's 1% for Art Ordinance on development projects within Port tidelands which include the areas of Port tidelands within the Chula Vista city limits. The Chula Vista Office of Arts & Culture staff and the Cultural Arts Commission's Public Art Sub-Committee periodically manage the public art work selection process for Port-funded public art projects in Chula Vista.

The City's Office of Arts & Culture has recently enacted, with Council approval, a process whereby loaned pieces of public art can be put on public display on City-owned properties for a period of time of one to three years.

In addition, there are currently in place two Chula Vista Redevelopment Agency 1% for Arts policies applicable to development projects within the Redevelopment Zones of Town Center I and Bayfront. Both policies impose public art selection and fund collection on the Redevelopment Agency itself, with design review conducted by the City's Design Review Committee. These policies were adopted prior to the creation of the current Office of Arts & Culture, the Chula Vista Cultural Arts Commission, and its Public Art Sub-Committee. Approximately 20 public art works and architectural enhancements (such as fountain features and stained glass windows) have been created as a result of these policies since 1979. Detailed information about each work is included in the City's "Public Art in Chula Vista" guide, coordinated by the Office of Arts & Culture and published by the Chula Vista Heritage Museum.



➤ *Chula Vista Public Library Programs*

At its three branches, the Chula Vista Public Library presents over 150 cultural programs annually. Programs include live music concerts, film presentations, book discussion groups, and author lectures. Almost 9,000 people attended cultural programs in 2004-05. In addition, over 22,000 children attended some 600 programs in that same year. Although most children's programs were literacy based, many introduced young people to music, movement, puppetry, and other cultural activities. In 2006, the Chula Vista Public Library also created a new Foundation to support the library as well as arts and culture in Chula Vista.

➤ *City of Chula Vista Recreation Department Programs*

The City of Chula Vista Recreation Department offers ongoing classes, open to the general public through a class fee and registration system, in a wide variety of arts and culture disciplines. Class subjects typically include: Ballet, Tap, Mexican Folk Dance, Belly Dancing, Polynesian Dance, Salsa, Hip Hop, Flamenco, Drawing, Sculpture, Cartoon Drawing, Creative Clay, Drawing/Watercolors, Acting, Guitar, Keyboards, and Little Voices Chorus. Annual class enrollment exceeds 7,000 individuals at the Recreation Centers and satellite locations. Approximately 440 classes are offered annually with an average enrollment of 16 students per class. Class instructors are drawn from a pool of arts and culture professionals within the community and they are compensated for their services.

Overview of Existing School-Based Arts and Culture Programs

➤ *Sweetwater Union High School District Visual and Performing Arts*

The Sweetwater Union High School District (SUHSD) has the largest school-based visual and performing arts program in the State of California and is the first district to offer formal Mariachi and Ballet Folklorico training. Recently, SUHSD arts students' academic test scores are consistently higher than non-arts students. Participation throughout the SUHSD is strong in all disciplines, with 53% of all district students participating in visual/performing arts programs.

The Chula Vista School for the Creative and Performing Arts (SCPA), housed at Chula Vista High School and Chula Vista Middle School, has over 800 students who have selected a "major" from many artistic disciplines, including Choir, Orchestra, Band, Ballet Folklorico, Ballet, Jazz, Tap Dance, Piano, Guitar, Mariachi, Music Theory, Computer Arts, Traditional Art, Stage Technology and Theatre Arts. SCPA students, on the average, have a GPA that is a full grade point higher than other students at Chula Vista High School.

SCPA also annually sponsors the Chula Vista Band Review, a weekend-long event that draws up to 4,000 visitors to Chula Vista from throughout California.

Bonita Vista High School's Show Choir, the Music Machine, has performed in 22 countries. Of the more than 16,000 high school choirs in the United States, the

Music Machine is consistently ranked in the top 10 in the nation. Music Machine has won over 300 awards in regional, state, national and international competitions.

➤ *Chula Vista Elementary School District*

The Chula Vista Elementary School District (CVESD) has two “Arts Magnet” schools in Allen Elementary School and Kellogg Elementary School. Both schools feature programs that involve students in curriculum-related, sequential skill-based instruction in dance, vocal music, drama, and art provided by specially trained staff and professional consultants.

➤ *Southwestern College*

Southwestern College is organized into academic units, referred to as schools. The School of Arts & Communication houses the disciplines of Art, Commercial Music, Dance, Graphic Design, Interdisciplinary New Media, Journalism, Music, Speech, Telemedia, and Theatre. The School’s main objective is to provide quality comprehensive programs that serve student needs. The broad curriculum offers students the opportunity to learn academic theory while gaining hands-on experience. Southwestern College maintains state-of-the-art equipment and facilities to support the growth and development of their programs.

Southwestern’s Arts & Communication classes include instruction in Art, Ceramics, Drawing, Painting, Printmaking, Photography, Graphic Design, Design in Wood, Jewelry & Metalwork, Interdisciplinary New Media Studies, Modern Dance, Ballet, Jazz Dance, Ballroom, Latin American, African, and Tap Dance. Music classes cover Instrumental Jazz Ensembles, Vocal Jazz Ensembles, Choral Music, Commercial Music, the nation’s only Mariachi Studies program, African Drumming, Chamber Singers, Piano, and Guitar. Theatre classes include Acting Workshops, Directing, and Technical Theatre.

Overview of Chula Vista-Based Arts Groups/Programs

➤ *Bonitafest Melodrama*

Now in its 29th year, the Bonitafest Melodrama is a community-based nonprofit organization that annually produces an original musical theatre production that celebrates the history of the Bonita and Chula Vista communities. Family-oriented melodramatic productions involve scores of theatre artists of all ages and run for four performances in conjunction with the Bonitafest celebration held every fall.

➤ *Chula Vista Art Guild and Bonita Artists Potpourri*

Both the Chula Vista Art Guild and the Bonita Artists Potpourri are all-volunteer based membership guilds of local visual artists practicing in all mediums. Both organizations display the works of their respective memberships throughout the City including local businesses, libraries, courthouses and outdoor venues. Neither group has its own facility.

➤ *Chula Vista Community Concert Band*

This is a recently-formed all volunteer community-based ensemble dedicated to

providing Chula Vista residents performances of band performances. Their goal is to reach 60 members and to work closely with school music programs in the City through workshops, clinics and master classes.

➤ *Dance Instruction Studios*

Chula Vista is home to approximately one dozen private dance instruction studios offering classes for students of all ages, with a major emphasis on children's instructional dance programs. These studios feature performances for live audiences on a regular basis.

➤ *Friends of the Arts*

Friends of the Arts is an all-volunteer non-profit agency founded in 1995 for the purpose of promoting, preserving and preserving fine arts in Chula Vista and the South Bay. Recent programs have emphasized music, art and drama workshops for children ages 5-17.

➤ *Imagination Express*

Imagination Express is a professionally trained Mime Troupe that performs mostly for school assemblies and community festivals. This is a private home based organization without a performance facility of its own.

➤ *Mariachi Scholarship Foundation*

In 2005 the Mariachi Scholarship Foundation, which is affiliated with SUHSD, sponsored the First Annual Chula Vista International Mariachi Conference, serving students of the South Bay as well as throughout California, Arizona and Texas with four days of mariachi instruction and performance.

➤ *OnStage Playhouse*

The OnStage Playhouse is currently in its 27th season and is the only live community theatre in Chula Vista. OnStage has a paid, part-time staff and operates year-round, producing six or more plays in an intimate storefront space.

➤ *South Bay Community Chorale*

This non-auditioned 100-voice choir is open to people of all ages. They have an extremely varied repertoire and annually produce two major concerts held at the Ruth Chapman Performing Arts Center. Through a partnership with the SCPA, the choir rehearses in the Theatre on K Street and provides scholarships for vocal music students. The choir is offered through the Chula Vista Adult School.

➤ *Third Avenue Village Association*

The Third Avenue Village Association (TAVA), formerly the Downtown Business Association, annually produces several community festivals including *Cinco de Mayo*, *the Lemon Festival*, and *Artwalk*. Each festival features live entertainment elements and visual arts presentations. In addition TAVA annually produces a series of live music concerts during July and August in conjunction with the Thursday afternoon Farmer's Market. Free concerts are staged in Memorial Park across from the Farmer's Market. TAVA has recently launched Third Thursdays on Third, a monthly celebration of local visual artists held in local businesses.

The TAVA office is used by the Chula Vista Art Guild as a small exhibition space

for its members. TAVA has also sponsored local artists who have painted utility boxes in the downtown urban core area and a Farmer's Market mural project, both with funding provided by the City's Performing and Visual Arts grants.

➤ *Regional Arts Groups in the Schools*

Multiple grants from the Mayor's Performing and Visual Arts Task Force have been made to fund educational outreach efforts to the schools, including:

- San Diego Opera's educational programming to Middle School students
- California Ballet's dance demonstrations to Middle School students
- Playwright's Project's work in Language Arts with High School students
- La Jolla Playhouse's stagecraft technical instruction for high school students
- Old Globe Theatre's educational programming in acting and dance for high school students
- The San Diego Symphony strings have provided both middle and high school level student stringed instrument instruction
- Installation Gallery has been working with elementary school students for several years with artist in residence programs
- Imagination Express has been working with K-5th grade students on dealing with social issues through performance art



- *Figure 5 – Existing Visual and Performing Arts Venues, Facilities and Programs in Chula Vista illustrates the locations of Chula Vista's existing venues and facilities for the visual and performing arts as well as the locations of major programs.*

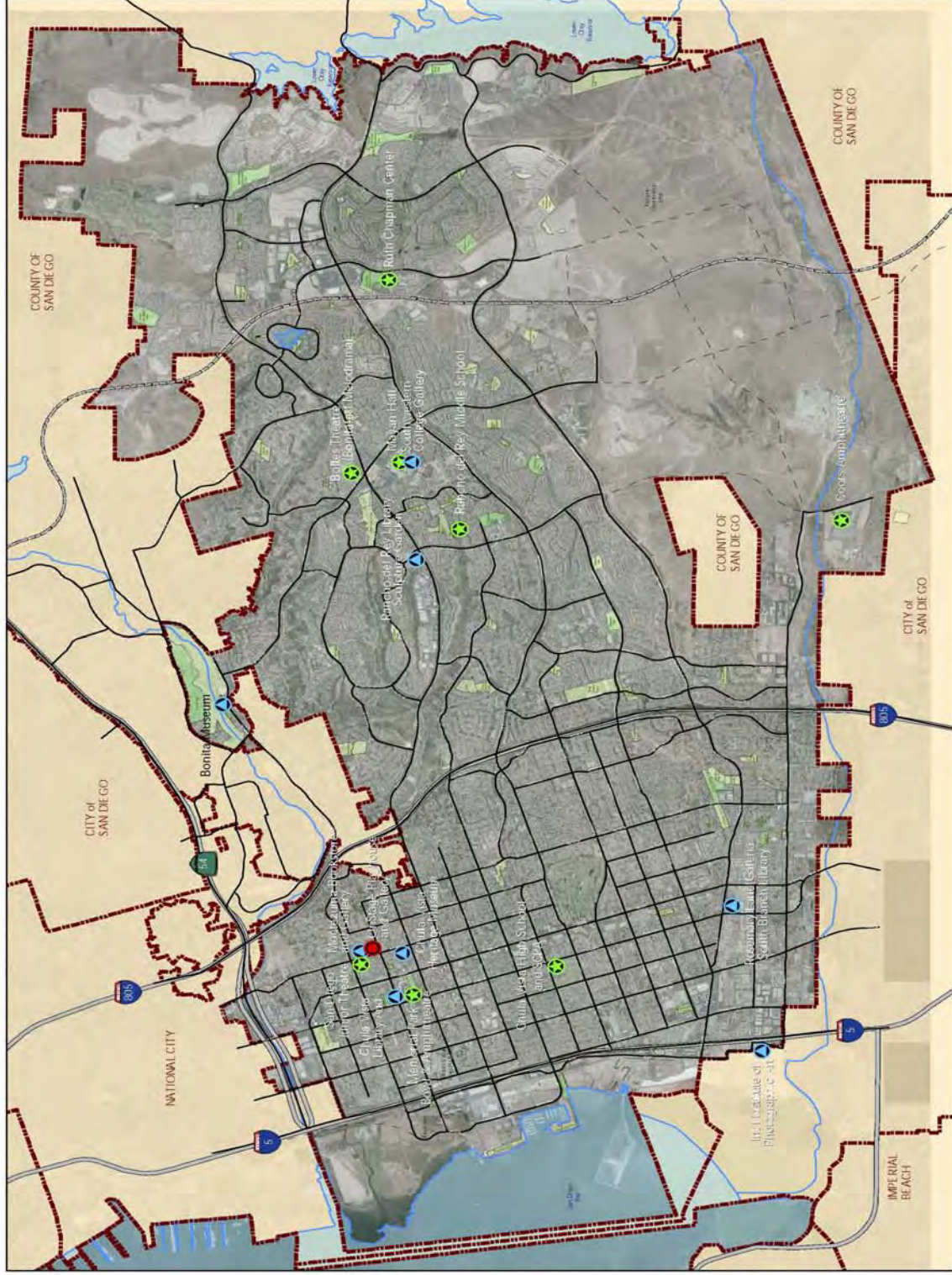


Figure 5: Existing Visual and Performing Arts Venues, Facilities and Programs in Chula Vista



**CITY OF
CHULA VISTA**







Performing Arts Venue

Visual Arts Facility

Arts Program



0 100 200 300 Feet



THE BROWN GROUP
CITY ARTS AND CULTURE PLANNERS